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Volume 12, Number 38

Serving New Jersey's African-American Community

June 26 - July 2, 1996

INSIDE:

AFRICAN-AMERICAN ANIMATORS BRING STYLE TO HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME

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WHITMAN SUPPORTS YOUTH AGAINST VIOLENCE INITIATIVE

Page 10

PLAINFIELD TASK FORCE UNVEILS BLUEPRINT FOR BETTER SCHOOLS

by Kelly Howard

PLAINFIELD—In a meeting recently with the Plainfield Board of Education, the Community Planning Task Force presented a blueprint for improving Plainfield's school system. The "Blueprint for Educational Excellence" is the result of long, hard work since September 1995, by the 17 task force members and over 150 other volunteers.

"What we did as a task force was to look at the directives from the board of education," said task force chairwoman Patricia Dunn. "With the purpose to develop a community vision of high standards of education, to prepare a blueprint for forming the education system, and to review and monitor corrective actions, the task force worked to gather recommendations."

Working with six "design teams," which were the working arms of the task force," said Dunn, they gathered over 109 recommendations that were then separated into a broad-based attention areas of: arts and culture; curriculum standards and goals; educational effectiveness and quality assurance; school, community and business partnerships; school-to-work transition; and transportation.

The blueprint's foundation is set on "two overarching goals" of changing the culture of schools to reflect the high expectations of students and to provide schools that are safe, orderly and conducive to learning. These are followed by eight specific goals:

- Involving the entire Plainfield community in the development of a broadly shared vision of educational excellence for all students;
 - Establishing initial grades throughout the district coherent, well-articulated curriculum with the assurance that all students will be afforded the opportunity to meet and exceed Plainfield's standards of what students should know and be able to do;
 - Establishing a variety of ways of assessing what students are learning and what they are able to do, using this assessment to help teachers tailor instruction to student needs;
 - Encouraging the development of teachers and encouraging their mastery and use of creative effective teaching methodologies;
 - Promoting all students' commitment and active engagement in the educational process during their enrollment in the Plainfield school district and as lifelong learners;
 - Developing an efficient and effective district-wide process for collecting, compiling and reporting data that describe student learning and performance;
 - Earning the confidence and increasing the active participation of Plainfield citizens in the education enterprise of the school district thereby increasing their support for ongoing improvement of public education in Plainfield; and
 - Encouraging the resources needed to continue the school district improvement process and to implement the measures necessary for all students that will enable them to meet and exceed Plainfield's learning and performance standards.
- Task force member Deborah Stapleton said that they wanted all areas—community, school, religious—be involved in the task force and that the task force would extend beyond the afternoon school bell.
- "This is the whole child we're concerned for," Superintendent Larry Levert said. "We need to get the parents, the work done by the task force and declared plans to continue this community/school effort. Together we will stick to our mission statement: the Plainfield Public Schools, in partnership with its community, shall do whatever it takes for every student to achieve high academic standards—no alibis, no excuses, no exceptions."

STATE REVEALS PLANS FOR EDUCATIONAL FUNDING

by Kelly Howard

TRENTON—A report released on May 17 by the New Jersey State Department of Education and Governor Christine Whitman, revealed plans to narrow the gap between richer and poorer schools districts and to meet a state Supreme Court order.

The plan will provide an additional \$235 million into school funding, with \$43 million targeted to help districts

adjust to the new core curriculum content standards (CCCS) outlined in a report also released that day.

"For the first time in the history of this State, we are proposing a school funding formula that is driven by both substantive educational standards and that is based on the 'efficient' delivery of a 'thorough' education," said chief counsel Harriet Derman.

With the CCCS and the Department of Education's new funding plan

hopes for providing the state's youth with a "thorough and efficient" education appear to many to be in sight. Yet, a few school officials are concerned about the long-term effects of the new funding program.

Officials of regional and higher-spending suburban school systems are worried over severe cutbacks by late 1997 because a key provision of the plan calls for districts to seek voter approval—with a subsequent increase

in taxes—to spend above the state estimate of what a "thorough and efficient" education should cost.

This provision is almost a contradiction of chief of staff Peter Vernino's statement that, "such and increase [\$235 million] in state aid makes us confident that no local tax increases will be required to fund the additional cost of the new system."

Also worrying some school officials is the cuts or small increases of

funding to various urban area schools. The cities of Teaneck, Plainfield, and Newark will see a decrease in total state aid 5.5 percent to 10 percent.

Total state aid will cut across the areas of CCCS, supplementary CCCS aid, special education, early childhood programs, demonstrably effective programs, transportation, bilingual education, county vocational education,

See EDUCATIONAL FUNDING/page 10

Remembering Ella Fitzgerald Church secures summer employment for teens

by Julian K. Robinson



First Lady of song Ella Fitzgerald

In addition to Marian Anderson, Paul Robeson, Joe Louis and Sugar Ray Robinson, my list of heroes and idols during my high school years included a group of jazz musicians, whose records I cherish and to this

day continue to collect. It is, therefore, with profound sadness and nostalgia that I join millions of fans in mourning the passing of one of the pre-eminent members of that group, legendary "First Lady of Song," Ella Fitzgerald, after a lengthy illness.

Ms. Fitzgerald died in mid-June at her home in Beverly Hills, California.

By the fall of this modern jazz had just about taken over the group of formerly swing era nightclubs that occupied that block of New York City's West 52nd Street between Fifth and Sixth Avenues.

See REMEMBERING ELLA/page 10

could afford the round trip fare and the cost of a beer or two at the bars of clubs like the Three Deuces, Onyx and The Famous Door. Even the risk of the occasional embarrassment of being refused service because of our slightly underage status, could not overcome our enthusiasm to hear and rub shoulders with instrumental giants like Bird, Dizzy, Miles and Prez and song stylists like Ella, Billie Holiday, Sarah Vaughan, Nat "King" Cole and Billy Eckstine.

My most memorable experience on 52nd Street occurred in late 1947 or early 1948 when I was seventeen. I and several buddies were wedged in at the bar in one of the aforementioned establishments eagerly looking forward to a performance by auto saxophone genius Charlie "Bird" Parker. Just before the first set, the small room and bar suddenly erupted in loud applause with the arrival of a vivacious 30-year-old Ella Fitzgerald, just back from her honeymoon with someone Parker had just left.

See REMEMBERING ELLA/page 10

by Terrence L. Dixon

HACKENSACK—Thanks to Mount Olive Baptist Church in Hackensack, some Bergen County African American adolescents this summer will experience the professional workplace and black-owned and operated businesses will experience a cost reduction.

Through Mt. Olive's Summer Youth Program, 50 adolescents will receive above minimum wage pay to work for one of more than 40 participating African American businesses in Bergen County.

"The church had noted large amounts of students seeking employment," said James E. Dow, director of the program. "In the past, they have not had jobs for more than one reason." Dow pointed out that African-American teens become frustrated seeking employment because of possible discriminatory practices such as submitting qualifying applications but

never hearing from employers and being told that advertised job openings are no longer available.

The program, conceptualized by Senior Pastor Gregory J. Jackson and Assistant Pastor Vernon C. Walton, which will run from July 8 to August 16, received overwhelming support from their committee. Applicants chosen will be paid \$5.25 hourly which the church and businesses will split. Mt. Olive has set aside \$22,000 to fund its portion of the salaries.

"Everyone has been cooperative. It's been a blessing. Right now, there are more jobs than students," said the program assistant's director, Stacey Wilber. She said applications are being received on a daily basis.

Dow said the program will especially benefit those African-American businesses that are in danger of collapsing. He explained that it can be economically hard to find employees to fill positions at businesses in danger.

See SUMMER JOBS/page 10

Exxon gas spill still taking its toll Audit released on Million Man March

by Asika Muhammad

by Ron Holland

NEPTUNE—Vestiges of ground water contamination continues to alarm 10th Avenue residents who link several cases of cancer to alleged rupture of an underground storage tank that spilled as much as 6,000 gallons of gasoline during excavation in October of 1989.

"The thing that's driving us crazy is that they're talking all this wonderful stuff they did, but in seven years they didn't do anything to clean it up," said community activist Dorothy Argoyos. "We were done here, it was absolutely horrendous you just can't believe it," she said.

Argoyos is a part of Neighbors United, a group of 10th Avenue residents that are demanding that the Texas-based Exxon Company, USA, clean the remnants of contaminants left in the soil and ground water at their now defunct reservoirs 33 and 35 station and adjacent residential properties.

The group protest weekly at the site to demonstrate to township officials that they are in opposition to the

company's request to modernize the site into a 24-hour service station and convenience store. "We don't want them here, period," said Argoyos.

A total of seven residents have been diagnosed with cancer subsequent to the tank removals, three of whom have since died. Neighbors United contends that the gasoline saturated ground water and soil caused some area residents to get cancer.

"In 1989 they knew of this problem. In 1989, my baby got sick. They could have stopped this problem in '89," said Mary Jackson, a 10th Avenue resident, whose 12-year-old son, Barry, had a cancerous growth on his kidney. Jackson's son has since had the kidney removed and has undergone chemotherapy. "He's fine now, but imagine the psychological impact this will have on my child because we don't know if this will ever come back," she said.

Exxon contracted two construction companies to excavate eleven underground storage tanks. One of

See EXXON SPILL/page 10

Newarks speak out on insurance charges

NEWARK—On Monday evening, June 17, over 70 Newark and surrounding area residents and insurance brokers faced New Jersey Insurance Commissioner, Cynthia Costello at a hearing sponsored and facilitated by NJ State (D-Esses) and Newark City Councilman, Ronald Rife. The meeting was co-sponsored by State Senator (D-Esses), Wyonna Lirman.

As they filed into the Council Chamber, in Newark City Hall, many of the attendees signed up for the chance to address the commissioner. Many of the residents and brokers shared similar stories, the most common of which for the residents was that they were unable to get automobile coverage even though they had good driving records.

However, the consensus was that if

they had bad records or numerous demerits on their licenses they would be accepted and forced to pay higher premiums. The residents also rallied against what they said was the common practice of being dropped by their insurance carrier if they outlived coverage based on the driving records of family members or other living in the same house or complex.

Senator Rife's father passed last year when he said he might have to tell his son and daughter to "stop coming by the house." On a serious note, all the respondents agreed that it was virtually impossible to find coverage within Newark and other urban areas.

The insurance professionals, many of whom said they had already been forced out of business, recounted tales

See INSURANCE CHARGES/page 10

WASHINGTON, DC—"We are very pleased to announce that an audit of the Million Man March (MMM) has been completed, and we are very pleased with the audit results," Dr. Benjamin F. Chavis, executive director of the March said in Washington on June 14.

The audit, performed by the independent certified public accounting firm of William H. Hill, of Washington, D.C., revealed that March organizers raised \$1,953,316 before, during and after the March against expenses of \$2,019,599, resulting in a deficit of \$66,283.

Considering that more than 2 million people participated in the massive solidarity demonstration at the West Front of the U.S. Capitol, Dr. Chavis

said it "is a miracle," that the deficit is not large.

"Minister Louis Farrakhan promised an audit of the MMM and as far as we know, this is the first time an event like this has occurred where we have made such an audit public," stated Kamal Muhammad, National Secretary of the Nation of Islam and Chief Financial Officer of the MMM.

The audit report answered the most nagging questions that have haunted March organizers, "what happened to the huge cardboard boxes of money seen being collected on live television, and how much was there?"

"On October 16, 1995 the participants in the march showed their support by donating \$245,687.62 on the spot, Mr. Muhammad said.

"Much more in donations could

have been collected, but with less than 300 collectors, covering an area of more than 20 city blocks, it was impossible to sufficiently cover the amount that wanted to be donated." According to Muhammad, MMM supporters, the LOCC, and the Nation of Islam are committed to eliminating the remaining deficit, with future fund-raisers and other activities.

"We are proud to say we met all the government's requests and safety measures as well as our own, and ended up with the largest, best organized, most peaceful demonstration ever seen in Washington, DC, and it was funded entirely on its own," Muhammad stated.

More than \$1,438,168 was spent. See AUDIT RELEASED/page 10

Ministers call for apology from Star-Ledger

NEWARK—"The Black Ministers Council of New Jersey recently issued a statement to the Star-Ledger to apologize to the African-American community in New Jersey for what it called an "unbalanced and insensitive" Father's Day story in the Monday edition (June 17).

On Monday's front page there was a picture and story with the heading, "Dad's Day in," which chronicled a young African American going with his mother and brother to visit his father on Father's Day at Northern Day Prison. The story also covered other children visiting their father's in prison.

"We do not accuse the Star-Ledger of racism, but poor judgment and insensitivity with this story," said Rev. Reginald T. Jackson, executive director of the Council. "We are happy that children are visiting their father who are in prison, this is good for fathers and children. But they don't just visit on Father's Day and all African-American fathers are not in

prison." But this story on the front page implies false and negative perception of African-American men," continued Jackson. "If the Star-Ledger wanted to do a constructive story it would have had some balance, children going to visit their fathers in prison and a story about single parents who happen to be fathers, who are raising their children. It should have had some balance."

There is a widespread feeling in the African-American community that the Star-Ledger emphasizes the negative about African Americans and puts it on the front page and buses the positive in the middle of the paper or not at all.

"This was absolutely insensitive and stigmatizing," said the Rev. Edward Smart, pastor of Israel Memorial AME Church, Newark and co-chair of Newark Fighting Back. "The Star-Ledger needs to apologize and explain the reasoning behind this front page story. Our concern is not the children

or inmates involved, but the appropriateness of the story on Father's Day. What was the message being sent out?"

The Council pointed out that it seems that positive stories involving African American don't make the front page "because it's not new," but negative stories involving African Americans "sell papers." Jackson pointed out that, "in almost every newspaper in the state the March to Trenton on May 6 was front page news, except in the Star-Ledger. Again this positive event was somewhere in the middle."

"We view this as poor judgment, not deliberate or racist," said the Rev. Raiford Wheeler, pastor of Park Avenue Christian Church, East Orange. "The Star-Ledger needs to do what it calls others in leadership to do in its editorials, and apologize for its mistakes."

The Council will be seeking a meeting with the editor to discuss their concerns.

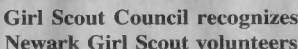
Community Calendar

Calendar listings show advance to en

THRU AUGUST 30
CRANFORD—Union County College is offer "Fantastic Fridays," a set of one-day computer training seminars from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. For more info call 908-709-7000.

BLOOMFIELD—Bloomfield College in Bloomfield recently awarded sophomore Shiranle Kelly of Plainfield the 1996 Alice W. Price Award in English, a

\$500.00. Selected by the College's English department, Kelly is an English major pursuing a teaching certificate.

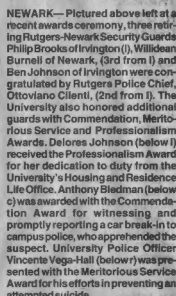


NEWARK—Accepting Community Awards for the Newark Museum's support of the council's programs for girls is Levelle Burr-Alexander (l), Outstanding Volunteer Pins were presented to Lisa Thomas (2nd l) and Joanne Miller (3rd r) who currently serve as co-service unit managers for their area of Newark. Receiving Outstanding Leader Pins are Letha Allie (2nd r), Beverly Rosado-Vega (r), and Yvonne Fisher (not present). Also receiving an Appreciation Pin was Rhona Fischer (not present), a retiring member of the council's Board of Directors.



NEWARK—Robert Taylor, EMT, received a Class A award at UMDNJ—University Hospital's annual EMS awards ceremony. The Newark resident was honored for entering a fire scene and rescuing a victim. Also honored was Newark resident, Angel Gonzalez, EMT. Class A awards are given to those EMS personnel who perform a heroic act while on duty in which they put their life in extreme jeopardy.

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NATIO N

Two more churches burned in Mississippi

MISSISSIPPI (NNPA)—Two southern black churches, both in Mississippi, were set afire, with investigators looking into the possibility of arson by NNPA presstime. The new incidents bring the total of black church fires up to at least 36, with at least four of the alleged arsonists taking place within

the past three weeks.

Meanwhile, President Clinton at presstime planned to meet with governors from several southern states about the fires. And the Christian Coalition, a predominantly white and conservative lobbying group, had its own summit the same week. It pledged

to raise money to rebuild the churches. Some civil rights organizations boycotted the event.

The Rev. Joseph Lowery, president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, has blamed conservative groups such as the coalition for setting the political climate for the fires.

Said Lowery of Christian Coalition head Ralph Reed, who has admitted the white Christian right was on the wrong side of the civil rights movement of the 1960s, "Mr. Reed says he seeks reconciliation with those who have been wronged, but at the same time, he arrogantly and unilaterally

summons us to a meeting without any consultation or input from us."

"What we are dealing with here is evil. The burning of churches is evil. But it is worse than that. It is worse than a small conspiracy among one or

See MORE BURNED CHURCHES/ page 10

National News at a Glance

TEAMSTERS ACCUSES BANK OF AMERICA OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

The Bank of America is loaning money to companies that cut workers jobs and benefits while denying loans from minority would-be home buyers, recently charged Local 601 of the Teamsters Union. The union, in a report, says the bank should adopt an "affirmative banking program that would increase both home loan and consumer lending in minority and low-income communities, and the proactive financing of businesses which create or retain high-skill, well-paying 'high-road' jobs." Bank representatives deny the charges, with a spokesperson quoted by the IPS wire service saying, "We finance businesses that create good jobs in the community."—WASHINGTON, DC

JEFFRIES

TRANSFERRED FROM NYU'S BLACK STUDIES DEPARTMENT

Dr. Leonard Jeffries, the City College of New York Africana Studies Department professor whose blunt 1991 remarks about Jewish and Italian disproportionate control of Hollywood images of blacks led to national howls in the white media of anti-Semitism, has been transferred out of the department as a result of administrative decisions to abolish it overall. Jeffries said he has received a letter saying he was now in City College's Political Science Department, but that his new associates want nothing to do with him. "This shuffling us [department faculty] from black studies to other departments spells the end of black studies because now we are beholden to another department," Jeffries, who previously had given up his chairmanship in an attempt to save the department, told reporters. "I thought since they were after me, I would surrender that seat to save the department. But it is clear now that the president had another agenda." A lawyer representing sympathetic students and faculty recently filed a lawsuit in State Supreme Court in an attempt to block the department closing. The school has said they would rather change Africana Studies into an interdisciplinary program. —NEW YORK

MORE BLACKS EARNING DIPLOMAS

America has more, and better educated, black residents, said a new set of Census Bureau statistics. Among the findings: As of last year, there are 33.5 million African-Americans, up from 30.3 million six years ago. And nearly 75 percent of blacks 25 and over have high school diplomas. —WASHINGTON, DC

TWO PLANNED TO KILL BLACK DISNEY WORLD TOURISTS, SAY POLICE

The plan was simple: The two were going to disguise themselves as Disney characters, then enter Walt Disney World in Orlando, Fla. and start killing black tourists. But authorities caught Kevin Foster and Christopher Black, both 16, members of an all-white gang, and charged them. —ORLANDO, FL

MANDELA'S PARTY DEFEATED IN LOCAL S.A. ELECTION

South Africa's National Party, whose members created and instituted apartheid in 1948, recently beat the African National Congress in that country's first non-racial, local government elections, reported the AIA/IN news service. Says the wire service: "Although the polls show a significant reduction in the NP's majority when compared to the 1994 general election, they confirm, however, that the ANC enjoys little support in the area, especially outside Cape Town. Although the ANC blamed its defeat on logistical problems and poor party organization, the major lesson is that merely marching [President Nelson Mandela] through rural wards—touting the so-called 'Mandela Magic'—cannot win the vote." —SOUTH AFRICA

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OPINION

EDITORIAL

We need to hold elected officials accountable

Newark Police Director William Celester became the 17th Essex County official and one in a long line of officials nationwide to be indicted for wrongdoing committed while in a local, state or federal position. While the precise impact of these ever-growing scandals are difficult to measure, it is clear by the turn out at the polls that the people are concerned if they are voting for the best person, and not just the best of two evils.

Citizens already worry if officials are going to pass laws that will effect them negatively or tax them greatly. They also worry about if the person voted in will be truly effective in their role for the community.

Having to be concerned if a government-voted or appointed official's behavior will be honest, and on the up-and-up is a whole other extreme. People that run for office or lobby for appointment should be doing so because they want to better some part of their community, and not to better their personal financial standing.

As a concerned community, we must ban together to police our officials not only to see that they are doing their job, but that they are not doing what they should not be doing. It may seem to be a big task to ask of ourselves. But with Celester's indictment, it is clear that if we do not do so, this type of behavior will continue to run rampant in our governments and communities.

End the shameful destruction of churches

Dear Editor:

The extended pattern of fire destruction of houses of worship in the South can be multi-classified: SHAMEFUL, DISGUSTING, PATHOLOGICAL and with TOTAL DISREGARD for a higher being.

It is amazing that more covert evidence has not yet been gathered and secured, even in the midst of some of the most sophisticated investigative methods and techniques in the world, as employed in these United States.

As NAACPers, African Americans and people of faith, we really wonder if the investigative efforts have been as diligent and intense as noted in other acts of violence and crime. Central Park and other individual victims of crime seem to receive greater investigative and police coverage than the 25 plus black houses of worship that have been destroyed by suspicious fire attacks.

There is a conscious pattern to destroy the black church facility, one of the most powerful institutions in the black community.

As President of New Jersey State NAACP, I applaud and appeal to the President of the United States, and yeah, the entire company of law enforcement officers to "do the right thing" in investigating, capturing, and bringing this shameful bombing of houses of worship to a conclusive ending, thereby identifying and punishing the shameful perpetrators.

Elaine C. Harrington
President NJ State NAACP

Newark is not all bad

Dear Editor:

I am disappointed by the constant lack of attention that is shown to groups in the Newark community that provide valuable volunteer services. It seems that only the bad events are publicized in Newark, and that no one wants to pay attention to the good deeds that are being done throughout the city.

A good example is the work of the Frontiers International Newark Club. This community service organization has been in existence since 1956, and has continued to be involved in the Newark community through various activities. The organization participates in the Adopt-A-School program, where two Newark public schools receive assistance from members. Frontiers sponsors an Annual Breakfast Fund-raiser where community leaders are honored and scholarships are provided for Newark college-bound students.

The Junior Frontiers provides service to the Newark community but does not receive any formal recognition. It is time that we begin to acknowledge the positive activities that are going on in Newark, rather than always focusing on the negative items that always seem to dominate the press.

We should begin to encourage groups such as Frontiers International, who have strong, solid commitments to the Newark community, and acknowledge their efforts.

Leonard Gilbert
Chairman Frontiers Youth Service Committee

FROM CAPITOL HILL

Free Speech for 'certain people'

by Asik Muhammad



Washington, DC. The views of blacks and whites are held to separate and unequal standards, when it comes to

free speech in modern America.

I am constantly amazed—but not surprised—at the brazen manner in which this unequal standard is openly flaunted in the faces of black folks.

Item: Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas speaks to Prince Georges County, MD middle school graduates.

Interpretation: He was forced down the throats of black folks nationally once again, when white liberals and conservatives alike, maintained that he should speak, as a matter of free speech.

Mr. Justice Thomas is free to speak anywhere, anytime. It is the presentation of him as a role model, as someone to look up to, which is objectionable. No one has the right, except black folks, to pay who we will project as our hero.

Item: Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich (R-GA) angrily denounced that DC Mayor Marion Barry apologize for referring to the overlord of Congress as Nazis. Later, he addressed them as Pharaohs, declaring: "Let our people go."

Interpretation: How dare a black politician express unequivocal condemnation of any class of white politicians?

Item: The Reverend Willie Wilson, Barry's pastor and pastor of Union Temple Baptist Church in DC, has been accused of injecting race into city politics because he referred to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. as a nigger.

See FREE SPEECH page 10

Saturday night special handguns must be stopped

by U.S. Senator Bill Bradley

The gun violence that occurs daily in our nation's towns and cities is directly related to the proliferation of domestically produced Saturday Night Specials. These handguns—produced primarily by a few companies in Southern California—are inexpensive, small-caliber, and very easy to conceal. They are poorly made from inferior materials and are so unreliable that they are useless for self-defense and sport.

Twenty-eight years ago, Congress passed the Gun Control Act of 1968 to rid American streets of these killing machines. The law banned imported guns, which were believed to be disproportionately involved in crime. Congress, however, exempted domestic manufacturers from the legislation, resulting in the creation of a protected domestic industry that produces and markets these weapons of destruction.

On March 25, I introduced legislation that would close this loophole by prohibiting the production and sale of domestically produced Saturday Night Specials.

Domestic Saturday Night Specials, easily hidden and costing as little as \$35 a piece, are the weapons of

choice for criminals. They are roughly 3.4 times more likely to be involved in violent crimes than are other kinds of handguns.

The Washington Post reported in June of 1994 that, of all 21,744 guns seized at crime scenes and traced by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF) from 1991 through 1993, an astounding 62 percent—or 13,559 handguns—were produced by manufacturers of Saturday Night Specials in Southern California. ABC television's *Day One* reported that in 1994, the Lovin' 380 ACP was the single firearm most frequently submitted to ATF for tracing.

These killing machines are the guns used to murder police officers. The single gun involved in the greatest number of police homicides per number of guns in circulation is the .32 caliber pistol. As of 1992, nine out of ten of these weapons were produced by domestic Saturday Night Special manufacturers.

Because they are so small and cheap, these weapons appeal to at-risk youth and may even increase the likelihood of little kids becoming involved in big-time crime. In 1990, a five-year-old from the Bronx, New York, carried a loaded domestic Saturday Night Special in his pocket to kindergarten. In

1992, a 15-year-old aimed a domestic Saturday Night Special from the roof of a New York apartment building and shot a policeman in the ankle.

But our cities are not the only areas affected by the use of these 'starter guns.' About a year ago, I visited with a woman in the suburban town of West Caldwell, New Jersey, who was shot in the eye by two teenagers using a .32-caliber gun during an attempted carjacking as she stood in her own driveway. This woman's ordeal underscored the vulnerability of even the quietest suburban neighborhoods to the threat of these cheap domestic guns.

Recently, I participated in a meeting with six central New Jersey police chiefs who showed me these guns and told me how important it is to do all we can to make it harder for criminals to get a hold of them. I had no idea how small they really were. They look like cheap die-cast toy pistols. I put one in my shirt pocket and it disappeared behind a three-by-five index card. One police chief told us how a suspect had hidden his Saturday Night Special in the arch of his shoe.

Although states such as New Jersey already have strong gun laws, the police chiefs argued for uniform fed-

eral legislation to prevent these domestic Saturday Night Specials from being transported across state lines. Some states, known as "source states," which have less strict handgun purchasing laws than those of New Jersey, are targeted by gun smugglers who purchase the guns legally and then transport them into New Jersey to sell them on the black market.

Statistics show that 90 percent of all weapons recovered in New Jersey over the last four years originated outside the state. This is particularly true of cheap, small, low-caliber handguns.

At a time when this nation's citizens are becoming increasingly afraid to walk through their own neighborhoods, we have reached the point where we need federal legislation to help each and every American regain a sense of security and confidence in the places they live, go to school and run their businesses.

In this nation, where we are supposed to have the free will to make our own choices for ourselves and our families, we can no longer live under the terrorizing reign of gun violence. We can and must take back our neighborhoods from domestically manufactured Saturday Night Special handguns.

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BUSINESS

Business Calendar

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 26

NEWARK—Hiring, Managing and Termination of Employees. Hosted by A/S Services Development at Newark International Airport from 9 a.m. to noon. For more info call 201-981-4278.

NEWARK—Workshop for prospective and existing business owners from 9 a.m. to noon in City Hall. For more info call 201-753-8159.

THURSDAY, JUNE 27

CHICAGO, IL—Target Market News presents the Marketing to African Americans Expo and Conference at The Swissotel, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily. For more info call 1-800-411-MAAX.

THURSDAY, JUNE 27

NEWARK—International Business Over Breakfast 8:30 to 10 a.m. at the Newark Club, One Newark Center, 22nd Fl. Call 201-242-9237.

NEWARK—General Membership Meeting of New Jersey United Minority Business Brain Trust at 6 p.m. at NJ Transit, One Penn Plaza. Guest speaker will be Anthony Robinson, president of Minority Business Legal Defense Education Fund. For more info call 908-233-6200.

GRANFORD—New and Emerging Communications Technologies: Competing in a Networked World. An interactive satellite videoconference, will be aired from 1 to 3 p.m. For more info call 908-709-7048.

SATURDAY, JUNE 29

NEWARK—Writing Business Plan seminar sponsored by NJ Small Business Development Center and the Alliance of Black Telecommunication Employees, Inc. at Rutgers Center, Engelhard Hall. For more info call 201-648-5950.

JULY 10 THRU 11

SECAUCUS—New York/New Jersey Minority Purchasing Council "Expo 96." Meadowlands Convention Center. Call Monica Gray 212-522-7632.

THURSDAY, JULY 11

SCOTCH PLAINS—How to Survive in Today's Economy seminar for business owners at 7 p.m. at Park Place Restaurant. For more info call 800-932-0093 or 908-494-4795.

Calendar listings should be sent two weeks in advance to ensure publication

Prominent minority women to defend affirmative action

by Mesha Mendenhall
& Leila McDowell

(NPPA)—Six of the nation's prominent legal organizations headed by women are launching an effort to protect affirmative action, a policy increasingly under assault in Congress, the courts and state governments. A bill co-sponsored by now-retired Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole and Senator Charles Canady (R-FL) is expected to come to a vote soon in the House.

The bill, called the Equal Opportunity Act of 1996, would effectively outlaw affirmative action by eliminating any consideration of race and gender in federal programs, including contracting, employment and educational opportunities.

"Affirmative action is needed to

day because discrimination is still very prevalent. We can't afford as a nation to turn the clock back to the days of segregation, of separate and unequal," states Barbara Aronwine, executive director of the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights Under Law.

Her organization is joining with the Asian Pacific American Legal Consortium, the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund, the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, the National Women's Law Center, and the Women's Legal Defense Fund to establish the consortium "Americans for a Fair Chance: Opening Doors to Opportunity through Affirmative Action."

Statistics paint a grim portrait of continuing discrimination in the United States. African Americans who con-

stitute 11 percent of the total workforce, make up less than three percent of lawyers and dentists and less than four percent of doctors, industrial engineers, engineers and managers in marketing, advertising and public relations. African American men with a college degree earn \$798 for every \$1,000 earned by their white male counterparts. The disparity in earnings increases as the education levels rise. Ninety-six percent of corporate CEOs are still white men.

Nationally, Blacks earn about one-fourth less in wages than whites and unemployment remains twice as high. The disparity for women is also telling. Women still make on average only a little over 70 cents per every dollar earned by men.

The Fair Employment Council of Greater Washington, Inc. conducted

several controlled experiments in the summer of 1994, sending equally qualified whites and African Americans to apply for jobs. Job offers were given to 46.9 percent of white applicants, as compared to only 11.3 percent of African Americans.

In 16.7 percent of the instances in which both the white and African American received offers, the white applicant was offered higher wages. White applicants were also notified of job vacancies while applying for other position at a rate 48 percent greater than African American applicants.

"It is this type of continuing discrimination that makes affirmative action so necessary not just in employment but in education as well," said Elaine Jones, director counsel of the NAACP-LDF. "How can we reverse

this persistent condition if the door to higher education are slammed shut to minority students?"

"The goal of Americans for a Fair Chance is to help Americans understand the truth about affirmative action," asserts Marcia Greenberger, co-president of the National Women's Law Center. "Affirmative action is simply giving everyone an equal chance to succeed on their own merit. Too often a person's race or gender has meant that they are not even considered."

The consortium, which plans to launch a series of public education initiatives, has already secured the agreement of noted actor Charles Dutton, star of the television program *Rose*, to record a public service announcement. The consortium can be reached by calling 202-662-8600.

Law Commission to focus on education

NEW BRUNSWICK—The New Jersey Commission on Professionalism in the Law has embarked on the development of educational programs for lawyers and judges designed to strengthen the commitment of the bar and bench to the highest standards of professional responsibility.

The Commission is a cooperative venture of the New Jersey State Bar Association, the state judiciary, and the three New Jersey law schools: Rutgers Law School-Newark, Rutgers Law School-Camden and Seton Hall University School of Law, Newark. The goal of the Commission is to help improve the quality of lawyers and legal services, and restore public confidence in the administration of justice.

The educational effort launched by the Commission will include the development of a "professionalism course" intended to sensitize lawyers and law students to professionalism concepts such as civility, client rela-

tions, conflicts of interest, litigation tactics, courtroom demeanor, dealing with adversaries and obligations owed to the court. The course, which will include a video and supporting materials, will be usable in a variety of educational settings including law schools, bar associations, new lawyer training programs, and legal education seminars. It is expected that the course will be made available later this year.

The Commission will participate in a number of judicial education forums and offer programs designed to increase judges' awareness of the critical role they play in setting a "climate" for proper conduct, monitoring litigation effectively and taking control of a courtroom. The Commission will sponsor a program at the 1996 New Jersey Judicial College, an event that brings together all state court judges. The Commission is also planning to participate regularly in training courses for new state court judges, and for municipal court judges.

Ghanaians visit Ref-Fuel plant

NEWARK—Newark officials recently hosted a group of municipal government representatives from Kumasi, Ghana, who were on a U.S. tour of their sister cities: Newark, NJ, and Charlotte, NC. One of the highlights of the Newark phase of the trip was a tour of American Ref-Fuel's Essex County Resource Recovery Facility, where some 2,500 tons of garbage per day is converted into electricity for 50,000 homes. Newark Councilman Donald Tucker, who has visited Ghana several times, escorted the visitors on their tour. Commemorative desk sets with U.S. and Ghanaian flags were presented to the visitors as mementos. From left: American Ref-Fuel Environmental Engineer Marty Suchan, Councilman Tucker, Kumasi Mayor Minister Daniel Agyekum and American Ref-Fuel Plant Services Supervisor Bob Scotto.



Karl Kani Infinity named 'B.E. Company of the Year'

NEW YORK—With its impending entries into the lucrative women's wear market, Karl Kani's couture and international clothing markets as well as its successful business designing fashions aimed at young black men, Los Angeles-based Karl Kani Infinity has been named the 1996 "B.E. Company of the Year."

Karl Kani Infinity is ranked No. 25 on the B.E. Industrial/Service 100 list with \$59 million in sales. That marks a 37 percent increase from its 1994 debut

on the list at No. 38 with \$43 million. Much of that growth can be attributed to Karl's expanding appeal. His trademark style, which includes baggy jeans and oversized casual knits, found an unexpected white suburban audience eager to mimic black urban fashion. This popularity, as well as savvy manufacturing and marketing strategies, has increased Karl's clout with large retail chains' buyers.

In some stores, his clothes now

occupy their own exclusive department, a distinction—and advantage—enjoyed by such megastore designers as Tommy Hilfinger and Calvin Klein. "Karl Kani has been able to successfully predict and set fashion trends while endearing the company to customers alike," said BLACK ENTERPRISE publisher Earl G. Graves. "He exemplifies the best in young African-American entrepreneurship."

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Whitman supports Youth Against Violence initiative

NEW BRUNSWICK—Governor Christie Whitman recently joined her husband John in New Brunswick, at the start of a "Youth Against Violence" billboard to discuss the importance of early intervention and prevention to stop youth violence. Gov. Whitman also congratulated the billboard's artist, Shaun Sunstein, an

inmate at Jamesburg Correctional Facility.

"My administration recognizes the importance of fighting juvenile crime, and has made it a priority," said Whitman. "This billboard represents an effective place for one teenager to others to stop the violence. It is evidence that young people, like Shaun,

who have made mistakes in the past can use their talents to achieve in the future."

The "Youth Against Violence" program is part of the governor's official participation in the National Governor's Association spouse program. The nation's first spouses have devoted 1996 to a campaign to raise

awareness and combat youth violence. As part of this program, John Whitman has been working with young inmates at the Jamesburg Correctional Facility.

"I wanted to go to Jamesburg with a purpose, not just a one-time drop-in visit by the Governor's husband, to convey the message to stop the violence," said Whitman. "I wanted to go to know the inmates, and stress the importance of turning their lives around, continuing their education and being productive members of society."

Since the fall of 1995, Whitman has been meeting with a group of young

inmates from the Jamesburg Correctional Facility to hear their concerns and frustrations, and to discuss ways to reduce the rate of youth violence. He asked the inmates to work on creative projects to help send a message to kids on the streets to stop the violence. Whitman plans to continue his work with the Jamesburg inmates, even after the National Governor's Association ends its campaign in January.

Shaun Sunstein, 18, of Willingboro, who participated in the program run through Jamesburg,

is the artist who created the "Stop the Violence" billboard message that was displayed on 20 billboards in 16 counties throughout the state. The ad depicts an eraser deleting the word violence in the message. The billboard runs until the end of June.

"Gannett Outdoor feels privileged to carry this important message," said company president Lou Giordano. "We commend the Governor and John for their commitment to raising awareness and putting a stop to youth violence."

Remembering Ella

Continued from page 1

Bird that evening, but for me all other recollections were immediately erased by the thrilling experience of being in the same room with the "First Lady of Song."

"I talked about it for years. The marriage to Brown lasted only four or five years, but fortunately for all of us, Ella's brilliant career continued on for five more decades. Her extensive legacy includes several motion pictures and some 250 record albums.

Upon her death, tributes to Ella poured in from around the globe. Perhaps, however, the two greatest tributes to her talent and style were rendered years ago. Ira Gershwin of the famed song-writing brother team once said, "I never knew how good our songs were until I heard Ella Fitzgerald sing them." And Duke Ellington's judgment about her musical ability said it all. According to the Duke, "Ella Fitzgerald is beyond category."

Insurance charges

Continued from page 1

of having to offer the bulk of their clients to agencies in suburban communities because the insurance companies would not accept policies from urban brokers.

Many said they had to drop clients they had for years, even though their driving records were impeccable. As the plight of their clients went, so too did the solvency of their businesses. They all agreed that they were being

Exxon spill

Continued from page 1

which failed a June 1989 test indicating an undetermined amount of fuel had been discharged. During excavation, Neighbors United charged that when a tank rupture contributed to the pre-existing leak and caused further ground water contamination. The group says Exxon is attempting to cover up the rupture and spillage amount.

Argyros said she happened upon the information of contaminated ground water when she visited the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) December of 1995, and reviewed a soil remediation work plan slated for the site.

In a statement from Texas, Bruce Tackett, a spokesperson for Exxon, denies that a rupture occurred. "An exact cause of these hydrocarbon levels has not been determined, but we know the levels present are not the result of either an explosion or a massive leak, neither of which occurred at our station."

According to reports, police and township officials were notified of a fuel spill at the route 33 and 35 site and responded to the scene. Upon arrival they were briefed by Township Fire Inspector Ken Northrup. "That an estimated 6,000 gallons of fuel and water had been released into an excavation hole on site. The cause of the release was the tearing of an underground storage tank during the placement of steel sheathing around the excavation site."

Both Exxon and DEP officials, while conceding that contamination still exists and migration did occur, said that the contamination, at shallow depths is at such low levels that it could not pose a problem.

Tackett noted that the 10th Avenue residents water supply is provided by the township and taken from deep wells not located in the area. Donna Plumber, case geologist for DEP's Bureau of Underground Storage Tanks said that the permeability of the soil only allows the ground water to "travel about 8 to 12 feet a year at this site. It can't move any faster."

Nutty Professor

Continued from page 7

Grazer stated that as the character developed, he and Murphy decided that the film could be a way to explore contemporary culture's obsession with weight in a humorous context.

Murphy and Grazer thought that Director Tom Shadyac would be a perfect addition to the team. "When I first heard early word about *The Nutty Professor* being developed, one thing about all stuck out in my mind—Eddie Murphy was going to star in it." For Shadyac, that meant "Eddie was totally interested in getting back to his roots: pure, foot-to-the-floor, let-loose comedy."

Summer jobs

ger. "It is a known fact that African Americans have to work harder," added Dow.

One of the African-American business participants, Paul Cuff, owner of Able Printing Shop in Fair Lawn, hopes that many young men and women become involved in business to see how they work, to learn the importance of poise and, and to learn to treat customers with courteous service.

slowly, and in some cases, not so slowly, forced out of their communities and out of their business.

Commissioner Randall said that the issue is of the highest priority to her office. "The blatant discrimination and certain communities is difficult to prosecute because, as many of the speakers indicated, it is a tacit process with either no paper trail or a limited one that can be camouflaged in various ways. She also encouraged the respondents to write down their complaints and note illegal and discriminatory practices and forward them to her office. She ensured that their confidentiality would be protected.

Audit released

Continued from page 1

on items such as six jumbo video screens and 3,000 portable toilets on the mall. Another \$581,431 was spent for administrative expenses such as salaries, supplies, telephone bills, travel, and hotel rooms.

One expense not reflected in the audit is a promise from March organizers to donate 10 percent of money collected on the day of the March to the host city. Leonard Farrakhani Muhammad, Chief of Staff of the NOI and Chairman of Million Man March Inc. called that promise a "friendly" agreement, which organizers intend to make good.

"It is eight months since the March," Dr. Chavis said in response to a question about whether or not organizers were legally permitted to collect money on the Mall. "Our only dispute with the park police right now is their count. They can't count. We had more than 2 million people, and they reported we had 400,000." Park Police officials insisted that their estimate of 450,000 was accurate.

"There has not been one communication from the United States park police, or the United States Capitol Police that there was any violation that took place on the mall," he said.

Educational funding

Continued from page 1

adult education, distance learning, rewards for achievement, extraordinary cost special education programs and stabilization aid.

A bill to support Whitman's plan has yet to be introduced in the Legislature, and Assemblyman Richard Bagger (R-Westfield), is suggesting another proposal that affluent districts be frozen at current per pupil spending levels and only have to seek voter approval if they want to raise those spending levels.

without fear and trepidation, what can they learn in peace?"

"Those who would destroy black churches are not just out to raze a building, they understand full well that they are attacking the most potent institution in rural African-American communities," stated Rep. Cynthia McKinney (D-GA).

Continued from page 1

"It will do more than keep a child off the street. It will raise their level of business consciousness," said Cuff. He supports Mr. Olive's endeavor because he feels the program is essential particularly for Bergen County adolescents. A native of the city, he said there are very few job opportunities for African American youth there.

The program will also be supplemented with workshops on developing interpersonal skills, resume writing, interviewing, and business etiquette. In turn, participating businesses will encourage leadership, provide knowledge of financial operations, and encourage African-American entrepreneurship.

Candidates for employment with the program must file an application by June 14 and be interviewed. Accepted candidates are then matched with businesses based on their skills. Applicants must be between ages of 15 and 18.

Everyone participating—the church, businesses, and adolescents—are reportedly very optimistic about the program. "It is at the beginning of something," said Cuff. "If you can get a spark, it can happen."

Free speech

Continued from page 4

Assistance Authority, commonly known as the "Financial Control Board."

Interpretation: The Rev. Wilson refers to the Authority as the out of control board because it has supreme power over not only financial matters but also the DC budget, but personnel and policy matters as well. The Board was appointed by President Clinton, and authorized by Congress. However, DC does not have a voice in this matter. In other words, the non-democratic Board is not answerable to the voters or any elected officials in Washington.

I wish someone would explain to me: Why does there seem to be a difference between the free speech rights of Justice Thomas, Mayor Barry, and the Rev. Wilson? The rights of Justice Thomas—whose views are anathema to most black folks, while not any threat to white folks—are secure. The rights of black leaders who advocate strongly in

behalf of black people, especially if they appear to be in defiance of white authorities, are insecure and always subject to criticism.

The fact that the District of Columbia—a virtual American colony that has no voting rights in the House of Representatives, and absolutely no (even token) representation in the Senate—is literally the property of Congress, heightens the arrogance of congressional leaders when they react to excesses by their black subjects in Washington.

That same attitude may explain why white Americans don't want African Americans to have independent opinions about places like Nigeria and other countries in Africa, or about foreign policy in general.

When we look at former American colonial property like Panama and Cuba, that same paternalistic attitude is expressed by American policy, so

African-American animators

Continued from page 7

classic tale has been filmed at least seven times, including screen versions starring legendary actors Lon Chaney (1923), Charles Laughton (1939), and Anthony Quinn (1957).

Husband took an entry-level animation position at Disney, and since, has worked his way up the ranks on many Disney projects including *The Fox and The Hound*, *The Great Mouse Detective*, *The Rescuers Down Under*,

The Little Mermaid, *Beauty and the Beast*, *The Lion King* and *Pocahontas*.

The creative team set out to capture Victor Hugo's essential story elements, characterizations, and themes, but unlike other film versions, they decided to celebrate the human spirit by portraying Quasimodo as a hero. And true to Disney tradition, the film is punctuated by comedy, fantasy,

and a musical score by the Academy Award-winning song writing team,

composer Alan Menken and lyricist Stephen Schwartz.

Toomey, Chapman, Husband and Michaels, West have all worked on numerous Disney animated features and say they would like to see more black and minority animators join them at Disney.

